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these gases; a flow rate of about 50 sccm to about 100 sccm for an inert carrier gas such as He or Ar; a temperature ranging from about 150 to about 600 degrees Celsius, a pressure ranging from about 50 millitorr to about 1 atmosphere (760 torr); and a process time ranging from about 50 to about 500 seconds. Again, one skilled in the art is aware that these parameters can be altered to achieve the same or a similar process.--

In the Claims:

Please amend claim 54 as follows:

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54. (Amended) A method of forming a semiconductor device, comprising:
 providing a first conductive layer;
 preventing at least some oxygen from migrating in relation to said first conductive layer by exposing the first conductive layer to a material selected from the group consisting of diborane, phosphine, hydrochloric acid, and boron trichloride; and
 providing a second conductive layer on the first conductive layer after exposure of the first conductive layer to the material selected from the group.

REMARKS

In an Office Action mailed July 22, 2002, the Examiner rejected claim 54 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,846,859 to Lee ("Lee"), and rejected claims 54-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,438,012 to Kamiyama ("Kamiyama").

Applicant's invention exposes a conductive layer to an oxygen-inhibiting plasma or other gas, including nitrogen free gases, prior to the formation of the another layer or layers on the conductive layer to substantially reduce the association of oxygen with the conductive layer during formation of the other layer or layers. By reducing the amount of oxygen associated with the conductive layer, the electrical characteristics of a semiconductor device including the conductive layer are improved, as will be discussed in more detail below with reference to the disclosed embodiments of the invention. In order to help the Examiner appreciate certain distinctions between the pending claims and the subject matter of the applied reference, the